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ACTION SS 25

INFO SSO 00,NSCE 00,CCO 00,MM 01,/026 W

O R 241230Z JAN 68 ZFF-1
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5005
SECDEF WASHDC
INFO CINCPAC
CJCS

DECLASSIFIED
Authority RAC 19/78
By ICS NARA, Date 8-4-98

~~T O P S E C R E T~~ SAIGON 16851

EXDIS

JOINT EMBASSY/MACV MESSAGE

SUBJ: TET CEASFIRE

1. THE CURRENT MILITARY SITUATION IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE AND THE ADJOINING DMZ AND LAOS AREAS RAISES THE QUESTION IN GENERAL WESTMORELAND'S AND MY MINDS OF THE FEASIBILITY OF OBSERVING A TET CEASFIRE IN THAT GENERAL AREA. IN OUR VIEW THE OVERT AND MASSIVE INVASION OF SOUTH VIETNAM IN STRENGTH BY FRESH, WELL-ARMED AND WELL-EQUIPPED NORTH VIETNAMESE REGULARS MAKES IT CLEARLY UNDESIRABLE FOR

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 16851 ~~T O P S E C R E T~~
US TO BE A PARTY TO A TRUCE IN QUANG TRI, THE DMZ, AND IN AT LEAST PART OF NVN AT THIS TIME. THE LATESTE EXAMPLE OF THEIR AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS IS THE OVERRUNNING TODAY OF THE FAR POST AT BAN HOUEI SANE ON HIGHWAY 9 IN LAOS WEST OF KHE SANH.

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2. BY HIS ACCELERATED AGGRESTION IN SOUTHEAST LAOS AND NORTHWEST RVN THE ENEMY HAS NULLIFIED COMPLETELY ANY PEACEFUL POTENTIAL THAT MAY HAVE ATTENDED A TRUCE IN THAT AREA AT TET, ONCE AGAIN CLARIFYING HANOI'S REPEATEDLY STATED AND DEMONSTRATED OBJECTIVES WITH RESPECT TO SOUTH VIET NAM. OUR EXPERIENCE WITH PAST HOLIDAY CEASE-FIRES GIVES US LITTLE REASON TO PRESUME THAT NVN FORCES INTEND TO OBSERVE THE CEASE-FIRE THEMSELVES ON THIS OCCASION WHERE IT IS NOT TO THEIR ADVANTAGE. THE PRESENT COMMUNIST POSTURE ALONG THE DMZ AND IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE REMOVES ANY DOUBT AS TO THIS. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS CLEAR THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO IMPROVE HIS RELATIVE MILITARY POSITION IN THIS AREA DURING THE CEASE-FIRE AT THE COST OF US AND VN LIVES.

3. OUR CONCERN ALSO RELATES TO THE CESSATION OF BOMBING OF NVN SINCE THE ENEMY CONTINUES TO MOVE MASSIVE QUANTITIES OF MEN AND MUNITIONS SOUTH TO SUPPORT HIS OPEN INVASION OF SOUTH VIETNAM. IT IS NOT CONSIDERED POLITICALLY FEASIBLE TO

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 1885 ~~T O P S E C R E T~~
MAINTAIN BOMBING THROUGHOUT NVN DURING THE TET TRUCE, WE CONSIDER THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO CONCINUE THE BOMBING IN THE AREAS THROUGH WHICH THE MAIN MOVEMENT IS FUNNELING. THIS WOULD BE SOUTH OF THE GENERAL AREA OF VINH, ABOUT HALF-WAY BETWEEN THE 18TH AND 19TH PARRELS, AND WOULD INCLJUDE THE TALLY HO AND ROUTE PACKAGE ONE AREAS. TO DO LESS WOULD, IN WESTMORELAND'S VIEW, COMMIT OUR FORCES IN QUANG TRI TO GREATLY INCREASED CASUALITIES AND DECIDEDLY DIS-ADVANTAGEOUS TACTICAL POSITIONING.

4. WE BOTH STRONGLY URGE EARLY ACCEPTACE OF THIS POSITION. WE WOULD THEN PLAN TO DISCUSS IT WITH PRESIDENT THIEU INFORM OUR SEVEN NATIONS ALLIES HERE, AND ANNOUNCE IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN TERMS WHICH WOULD GAIN THE MAXIMUM PROPAGANDA ADVANTAGE FOR THE FREE WORLD FORCES.
BUNKER

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